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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Chairman:	Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Vice-Chairman)	(Cuba)
later:	Mr. MUNTASSER (Chairman)	(Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mrs. Goicochea (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/46/3, A/46/6/Rev.1, A/46/7)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/16 and Add.1, A/46/173 and A/46/330)

1. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that the expenditures of the United Nations should be limited as much as possible through the revision and monitoring of existing programmes and the elimination of marginal or ineffective programmes and activities; he shared the concern of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) with regard to the management and control of extrabudgetary funds.

2. The United Nations had been exploited by some countries in their relentless political warfare against Israel; Israel could not, therefore, support the allocation of funds in the United Nations budget for such purposes. Such large sums should instead be devoted to enhancing economic and social well-being and eradicating poverty in the developing countries. On the eve of the convening of a regional peace conference, and in the spirit of a new era of cooperation among Member States to reach broad agreement on the budget, efforts should be made to refrain from the approval of resource appropriations and the adoption of resolutions which might be prejudicial to the peace process in the Middle East. The parties concerned should hold direct negotiations on all the issues in order to achieve constructive solutions.

3. Despite its limited resources, Israel engaged in bilateral development cooperation with many Asian, African and Latin American Member States with a view to improving social and economic conditions throughout the world; that was one of the basic objectives of the United Nations, and he hoped that priority would be given to economic and development activities.

4. Count de MARCHANT et d'ANSEMBOURG (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the Twelve States members of the European Community, emphasized the importance of the financing of appropriations. A discussion of the budget would be ineffective if two thirds of the Member States did not fulfil their obligations to pay their assessed contributions to the budget and to peace-keeping operations promptly and in full. The position of those States was all the more ironic when they supported the appropriations.

5. The proposed budget for 1992-1993 had been drafted on the basis of Assenbly resolution 45/255 concerning the budget outline. The main purpose of the outline had been to involve Member States in the budget process at an

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earlier stage. It was important to maintain confidence in the outline and, accordingly, to respect the level established therein.

6. A budget was a key policy document which should establish the link between programme objectives and resources. Accordingly, the United Nations programme budget should reflect the priorities outlined in the Charter and should give the Assembly the information which it needed in order to decide whether the resources requested and the changes proposed would enable the Secretary-General to achieve the objectives set.

7. The Twelve had carefully studied the proposed programme budget, as well as the reports of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and of ACABQ, which were complementary in that the former covered the programmatic content of the budget, while the latter concentrated on the financial and administrative aspects. It should be noted that, despite the modest changes in the budget format and the willingness to improve the presentation of the document, some ambiguities persisted, for instance with regard to the growth rate, which depended on the distinction drawn between recurrent and non-recurrent expenditure and which was affected by changes of definition. In addition, the budget indicated only the growth rate compared with the revised estimates for the second year of the preceding biennium, whereas a comparison with the initial appropriations, as in the outline, would yield different results. Moreover, the problem of additional expenditures, including those deriving from inflation and currency fluctuations, which were not covered by the contingency fund, remained outstanding. It was to be hoped that the budget format could be further improved on the basis of the recommendations of CPC and ACABQ.

8. The recommendations of the proposed ad hoc technical seminar should enable the Secretary-General to draw up proposals on methodology and the budget format which would, after consideration at the forty-seventh session, be used in the preparation of the budget for 1994-1995. It would be appropriate to review at the same time the Regulations and Rules governing the Programme Planning and Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. Those activities were an integral part of the efforts to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the budgetary and decision-making process.

9. The Twelve were concerned that the results of the search for efficiency were not easily seen in the proposed programme budget and that, on the contrary, there were proposals for a net increase in established posts and for a number of upward reclassifications, despite the appeal in General Assembly resolution 45/254 for maximum restraint in proposals for the staffing table. At the very least, it would be logical to expect a significant increase in productivity as a result of the programme of technological innovations. As the Secretary-General had indicated, there was a need to continue improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat. In the view of the

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Twelve, it was not only desirable but essential that an active administrative reform should continue.

10. It was a source of concern that the proposed budget tended to confirm the existing pattern of the Secretariat's structure rather than provide a genuine rating of programme priorities. It was regrettable that very few activities had been considered to be obsolete or of little relevance; in reality, the programmatic content of the proposed budget was to a large extent identical to that of previous budgets. At a time when the United Nations was called upon to seek solutions to new challenges, it would have been of the utmost importance for resources to be redeployed so as to have a maximum impact. The Twelve would have welcomed a more solid justification for a number of the changes in the subprogrammes.

11. In paragraph 400 of its report (A/46/16), CPC had stressed the importance of a review of resource utilization and noted that the current link between programme performance and budget performance was unclear, mainly because of the lack of a system of responsibility and accountability for programme managers and of a clear formulation of programme objectives, as distinct from programme activities. The establishment of such a system would be beneficial both for the Organization as a whole and for the internal budget preparation process. The Twelve fully supported the CPC recommendation in the matter.

12. During the preparation of the medium-term plan, the regular budget and the statements of programme budget implications, programme managers should cooperate closely with the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance. The role of the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board in the internal budget preparation process should also be strengthened.

13. It was regrettable that there had been an error in the recosting of the outline and that, as a consequence, the size of the contingency fund for 1992-1993 would need to be recalculated.

14. With regard to the overall size of the budget, the Twelve noted that, although growth over the past 10 years, as calculated with the current methodology, was perhaps not excessive, the United Nations budget had grown considerably in dollar terms. At a time when the Organization was being asked to face commitments that called for a new thrust as well as structural changes in the Secretariat, there was room for the consideration of a more dynamic approach to the fundamental issue of resource growth in relation to priority areas. Such an approach might be based on a distinction between support activities and other general services, on the one hand, and the core activities of the United Nations covered in Parts I to VI of the proposed programme budget, on the other. The growth of resource requirements for activities covered in those Parts, in areas where they would have the maximum impact, could result from redeployment through a review of programmes or from the allocation of additional funds. Strict limits would be imposed on support

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and other general services. That approach would enable the Organization to respond better to new requirements in the years ahead.

15. More attention should be paid to the internal distribution of the budget. Expenditures directly related to human resources accounted for 80 per cent of the budget total and remuneration was one of the major administrative issues currently facing the Organization. The Twelve appreciated the special concern with regard to the Professional and higher categories. An innovative approach based on gains in productivity merited consideration.

16. With regard to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Twelve would appreciate information from its Chairman about the distribution by object of expenditure of the across-the-board reduction of $15 million proposed in paragraph 22 of the ACABQ report (A/46/7).

17. On the question of programmes and priorities, discussed in paragraphs 8 to 14 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget, the Twelve fully supported peace-keeping and peace-making activities, attached importance to drug abuse control and issues related to the environment, were sensitive to the problems of developing countries, particularly in Africa, and had a special interest in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

18. The introduction to the budget referred to a number of new or expanded activities, notably in relation to the new programme on Africa and in section 28, Human rights. The revised narrative recommended by CPC for the programme on Africa was a considerable improvement. With regard to human rights, which was becoming the world community's dominant concern, further growth in resource requirements could be expected.

19. The Twelve firmly supported the recommendation of CPC with regard to improvements in the budget format. The current voluminous financial-administrative format provided a tremendous amount of detail, but not enough information on the objectives of programmes and the resources required to achieve them. Moreover, it was clear from the performance reports that, once the budget had been adopted, its implementation was not necessarily executed along the lines of the proposal. The intergovernmental decision-making process should also be improved and the review of the programme budget by CPC enhanced. A budget document drafted as a policy document, as opposed to the current strictly administrative document, would be of considerable importance in upgrading the debate and would enable CPC to fulfil effectively the task assigned to it in resolution 41/123. Some organizations within the United Nations system were restructuring their budget documents at the request of their governing bodies and that restructuring had considerably improved the insight of members into the workings of the programmes.

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20. The Twelve looked forward to the Secretary-General's report on extrabudgetary resources and stressed the need to pay particular attention to the effects of those resources on the medium-term plan and on the budgets of various programmes.

21. The Twelve were generally in agreement with the recommendations of CPC on the Secretary-General's report on the methodology for monitoring and reporting the programme performance of the United Nations (A/46/173) and endorsed the remark made by the Advisory Committee that the effectiveness of monitoring was a function of the quality of the medium-term plan and the programme budget. In that connection, they emphasized that the cost-effectiveness of those procedures should be kept in mind.

22. The Twelve looked forward to the review of the medium-term plan during the thirty-second session of CPC. They wished to state, however, that it was not the task of the Fifth Committee to rewrite the narratives of the sections but rather that of the Main Committees which dealt with the substantive aspects. The sectoral, regional and central reviewing bodies should enhance the quality of their review activities.

23. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that the Secretary-General had submitted a proposed programme budget for 1992-1993 in the amount of $2,363,977,700 and the Advisory Committee had recommended reductions totalling $43,382,100, or about 1.7 per cent of the Secretary-General's estimates of expenditure. The differences between the two projections were deeply disquieting. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee had stressed that the reductions would not affect the level of activities and had dismissed any notion of a link between them and the political position that zero real growth of United Nations budgets should be mandatory. Although, in resolution 41/213, the General Assembly had proclaimed its commitment to improving the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, it had made it clear that any measures adopted to that end should not affect the implementation of mandated programmes. His delegation was hesitant to endorse the reductions proposed by the Advisory Committee because it believed that they could have an adverse effect on the implementation of those programmes. It therefore looked forward to the details that would be presented during the examination of the various sections of the proposed programme budget.

24. Improvements had been made in the format of the proposed programme budget, in particular there was a closer correspondence between the Parts of the proposed programme budget and the major programmes of the medium-term plan that permitted an appreciation of the relevance of the policy directives in the plan to the proposed programme budget. Serious consideration should be given to the possibility of transferring sections 21 and 22 to Part VI, which should be redesignated "International cooperation for social development and humanitarian affairs". His delegation urged CPC, the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat to work together towards the establishment of a direct and

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closer correspondence between the medium-term plan and the proposed programme budget. The medium-term plan should determine the format of the proposed programme budget. Obviously, given the advantages of the format of the proposed programme budget, much remained to be done to improve the framework itself, namely the medium-term plan. The Advisory Committee should be more constructive and cooperative in its involvement in the collective efforts to develop the new budgetary process.

25. Any discussion of the methodology for preparing the budget must be based on a clear appreciation of the purposes, roles and relevance of the three main instruments of the new budgetary process, namely the medium-term plan, the programme budget outline and the programme budget. The medium-term plan, as a policy directive, was a framework defined in terms of programmes, objectives and strategies for realizing the objectives. According to annex I of General Assembly resolution 41/213, the outline should contain "an indication" of the resources needed, the growth rate of the budget and the size of the contingency fund. Regulation 4.2 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning stipulated that programme proposals in the budget should aim at implementing the strategy in the medium-term plan. Clearly, then, the relevance of the medium-term plan in considering the proposed programme budget lay in the correspondence established at the strategic level, i.e. at the activity level. The outline's main purpose was to serve as an indicator of resource requirements, both perennial and contingency, and of real growth. As the Chairman of ACABQ had stressed, it was neither a ceiling nor a directive to be followed to the letter.

26. With respect to the methodology for the preparation of budget proposals, the programme budget outline gave a satisfactory indication of resource requirements. The proposed programme budget of $2,362,977,700 was $3,322,300 below the level of resources indicated in the outline, which represented a record 99.9 per cent margin of success in the prediction of resources. The accurate prediction of resources in the new budgetary process would allow Member States to reflect their estimated assessed contributions in their national budgets. The Secretariat was to be commended for that achievement.

27. Differences had surfaced between the outline and the proposed budget on the question of real growth, since the former had foreseen nò growth at all and the latter 0.9 per cent. However, as the outline and the proposed budget had different points of origin, it was not yet possible to link the two, particularly for purposes of policy formulation.

28. With regard to the incorporation of the revised appropriations into the maintenance base, his delegation shared the view of ACABQ that certain concepts needed re-examination. For example, the concept of "non-recurrent items" was more meaningful in the case of annual budgets. The concept of "delayed impact" was said to refer to the unfunded portions of new provisions, such as posts, which became permanent additions to the base after one biennium's delay. What was important was that the item had been predictable at the time the budget was prepared because it derived from a legislative

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mandate. It was confusing to replace "predictability" with "impact" in revaluating revised appropriations to establish the maintenance base.

29. The reductions recommended by ACABQ were closely related to the methodology. While the Secretariat had prepared its proposed budget on the basis of the revised appropriations, ACABQ appeared to have assessed the Organization's financial requirements on the basis of actual expenditure, or what its Chairman had elected to call "savings". It should be recognized that programme performance reports had demonstrated the Secretariat's ability to carry out all mandated programmes and to record a surplus of funds; proper attention should therefore be given to the role of programme performance reports in preparing programme budgets. However, ACABQ had failed to recognize that the United Nations Secretariat was not a profit-making organization but, to a large extent, a service organization which did not immediately react to changes in its level of financial resources unless they affected the payment of emoluments. While it was true that increased resources did not necessarily lead to increased efficiency, it was equally true that in public service industries, decreased resources did not visibly entail decreased efficiency. The survival of such organizations neither justified nor explained the reduction of the resources they evidently required. His delegation would not support the adoption of a purely political approach to expenditure control by ACABQ. The Organization's administrative and financial functioning should not be a political game.

30. Another concept that must be clearly defined was that of flexibility. The Secretary-General had the authority to redeploy resources within sections of the budget. His delegation was not convinced of the need to give the Secretary-General flexibility to redeploy resources among different sections of the budget, which would undermine the rationale behind appropriations. The various existing mechanisms and procedures should be used to ensure the availability of adequate resources to all sections of the programme budget.

31. His delegation reserved the right to state its position on staffing proposals when they were examined in detail. There must, however, be a more judicious balance in the redistribution and reclassification of posts. For example, in view of the duties involved, the post of Secretary of the Fifth Committee should be classified as D-2. It would also be appropriate to reclassify the post of Secretary of CPC. Moreover, his delegation believed that the General Assembly should continue to play a role in all reclassifications.

32. He was concerned about the increasing percentage of extrabudgetary resources used to finance activities related to the regular budget. That trend ran counter to the Organization's democratic principles and practices. The management and control of the funds should be brought under legislative guidance; such a step would be in the interest of donors in that it would promote a more transparent accountability. Serious consideration should also be given to the possibility of broadening the application of Article 17 of the Charter to cover the funding of all activities related to the regular budget.

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33. The Fifth Committee must discuss the proposed budget and the recommendations of ACABQ frankly and objectively. The effectiveness of the Fifth Committee's work would be measured by the availability of resources for programme implementation. His delegation was ready to work for the adoption by consensus of a programme budget for 1992-1993 that reflected the priorities set by the General Assembly in the medium-term plan.

34. Mr. JIN Yongjian (China) said he attached great importance to the deliberations on the proposed programme budget, which, once approved, would be the guiding instrument for the work of the United Nations in all fields during the forthcoming biennium. The deliberations and suggestions of CPC constituted a solid foundation for the Fifth Committee's consideration of the proposed budget.

35. With regard to the total programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, it was important to take the current situation of the United Nations into account and to settle the question on that basis. With the evolution and vicissitudes of the world political and economic situation, the role of the United Nations was being strengthened further and growing more complex. It was therefore reasonable and understandable that the Organization's budget should be increased to meet the new challenges. Moreover, the proposed programme budget had been prepared in the framework of the programmes approved in the medium-term plan for 1992-1997; obviously, the new budget should include enough resources to implement those programmes. In the light of those considerations, there should be an appropriate increase in the programme budget.

36. As for the discrepancy between the outline adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session and the proposed programme budget, the figure proposed in the outline was only an initial estimate; it should not be regarded as the ceiling for the final programme budget. However, it was impossible to ignore the deficiencies and confusion involved in formulating the outline and the proposed budget. His delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would act on the recommendations of ACABQ and CPC and improve the methodology and format for preparing future programme budget proposals.

37. Further examination and streamlining of costs were necessary in the areas of furniture and equipment purchases, travel expenses, printing and other administrative costs. In preparing the new budget, consideration should also be given to unused appropriations and unliquidated obligations from the previous biennium. His delegation thus consented in principle to the Advisory Committee's proposals for appropriate reductions to be made in the programme budget submitted by the Secretary-General.

38. His delegation was pleased to note that, in preparing the budget, the Secretary-General had respected the priorities referred to in General Assembly resolution 45/255. However, the increase in resources allocated to programmes dealing with the economic development of the developing countries

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was insufficient, and organizations such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Centre For Science and Technology for Development, which were closely identified with that priority, had even experienced cuts. His delegation hoped that the Fifth Committee would attach due importance in its deliberations to the opinions expressed on that subject by the delegations of many developing countries during the thirty-first session of CPC.

39. With respect to staffing, the Secretary-General proposed an increase of 81 posts and the reclassification of 67 posts. The workload of the United Nations had grown in recent years, and it was therefore reasonable that the number of posts should increase. However, the Secretary-General should supply an analysis of the workload that justified such an increase. Moreover, various United Nations bodies would be able to increase their work capacity and efficiency substantially as a result of technological progress. On that basis, his delegation supported the recommendations of ACABQ that the number of additional posts and post reclassifications proposed by the Secretary-General should be reduced.

40. As both the Secretary-General and the Chairman of ACABQ had pointed out, the financial situation of the United Nations remained critical. His delegation shared that concern and called upon all Member States, especially those with a solid capacity to pay, to be guided by the spirit of the Charter and to fulfil their financial obligations on time and in full.

41. Mr. Muntasser (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) took the Chair.

42. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that the cessation of ideological conflicts between East and West should enhance the ability of Member States to reach a consensus on important questions that concerned them all, such as the environment, international drug control, human rights, the development of the developing countries, African economic recovery, the resolution of regional conflicts and emergency humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons. For the United Nations system to be able to promote cooperation in those priority areas and to respond to the needs of Member States, it was necessary to strengthen the Organization and improve the services it offered. The budget for the biennium 1992-1993 served those purposes by providing a level of resources that was adequate to meet needs and, more importantly, by contributing to the enhancement of the Secretariat's capacity and increasing its efficiency. His delegation supported the recommendation of CPC that the search for a more efficient and effective Organization should be intensified; the ability of the United Nations to achieve its objectives and respond to challenges depended on the success of that search. The proposed budget would enable the United Nations to pursue more actively the reforms emanating from the recommendations of the Group of 18 which the General Assembly had adopted in resolution 41/213.

43. The purpose of reform was not to reduce personnel and financial resources, but to enhance productivity and efficiency, strengthen financial

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discipline and make optimum use of the valuable resources contributed by Member States. It was important that the Organization should be bold enough to redeploy substantial resources to priority areas, a task that could be achieved within the framework of the new planning and budgeting procedure established in General Assembly resolution 41/213. As resources were limited, his delegation joined CPC in stressing that, in implementing the programme budget, all intergovernmental bodies should fulfil their roles within their terms of reference and in conformity with the new budgetary procedures.

44. His delegation also urged the Secretary-General to continue implementing, through the programme budget, the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213; in particular, he should pursue his efforts to: implement recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 and increase staff productivity; develop workload-analysis techniques that could be used in preparing the budget; put an end to the perpetual top-heaviness of the staffing structure and rejuvenate the staff; review the utility of vacancy management in achieving reform; and establish clearer, more coherent personnel policy based on objective criteria for recruitment, performance evaluation and promotion.

45. The distribution of resources by major programme in the programme budget should enable the Organization to fulfil its objectives and mandates. In general, there had been considerable improvement in the presentation of the budget, reflecting the agreement reached by Member States on objectives, priorities and the total level of resources required. Nevertheless, there was still room for improvement in dealing with such issues as the way that budget performance was taken into account in formulating precise cost estimates, the total level of resources, the increase in the number of posts and the distribution of resources among priority areas. Continued use of the current methodology for preparing the programme budget, and its relation to the outline were also debatable. His delegation was thus pleased to note that CPC had recommended revision of the methodology. Among the notable changes suggested were drawing a clear distinction between recurrent and non-recurrent expenditures and developing a method for measuring growth. His delegation expected that the methodological issues identified by ACABQ and CPC, together with the recommendation of those bodies as to the approach that should be taken to them, would be approved by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

46. His delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts to keep the overall level of resources for the biennium 1992-1993 within the total preliminary amount approved in the budget outline; however, it was concerned that the Secretariat had taken as its point of departure in formulating its proposed budget the revised estimates for the biennium 1990-1991, instead of the outline, which was the framework Governments had agreed on for the preparation of the budget. By doing so, it undermined the importance of the outline and virtually ensured that all budgets would be cast from the same mold. The outline was a dynamic instrument for facilitating dialogue between the Secretary-General and Member States on the total level of resources, as

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well as for identifying new priorities that should be embodied in the programme budget. The outline did not impose a rigid framework on the activities of the Organization; on the contrary, if it was based on an active dialogue, it contributed to the achievement of the goal of programme budgeting, namely, a budget that promoted the development of dynamic policies by reflecting the changing priorities of the work of the Organization.

47. The level of resources requested by the Secretary-General was very high, inasmuch as it represented an increase of 10.7 per cent over the revised estimate for the biennium 1990-1991 and 40.5 per cent over the initial appropriation for the biennium 1988-1989. Such a rapid increase in such a short period of time would certainly have an impact on Member States, particularly those that had to purchase "hard currency" to pay their assessed contributions. Even if real growth was much lower than the apparent increase, it placed an increased burden on Governments and taxpayers.

48. It was difficult to agree with the Secretary-General that 0.9 per cent growth in real terms was a modest increase. Nor was his delegation convinced that the Secretary-General had so little flexibility in meeting the new demands. As CPC had recommended, the programme budget should reflect the premises on which the outline proposed by the Secretary-General was based and adopted, and in the outline the Secretary-General anticipated zero real growth. Irrespective of whether the General Assembly had taken a formal decision to adopt a zero real growth rate, it was impossible to understand how the outline could be used to justify a 0.9 per cent rate. It seemed that the methodology for formulating the budget seriously contravened the decision on the outline adopted by the General Assembly by consensus.

49. The inclusion of so-called "non-recurrent expenditures" in every biennial budget would seem to provide the Organization with the flexibility to meet new challenges. If such expenditures were included in the increase and in the revalued base for calculating the rate of real growth adjusted for inflation and exchange-rate fluctuations, in accordance with government and business practice, the real rate of growth of the proposed budget was 6.3 per cent in relation to the revised estimates for the current biennium.

50. The across-the-board reduction of $13.3 million recommended on the basis of the review of past underutilized balances represented 0.56 per cent of the proposed total appropriation for the next biennium. The $10 million deleted from the budget for the biennium 1988-1989 represented precisely the same proportion of that budget. In the current biennium the audited financial statements showed that in almost every budget section there was an unencumbered balance of more than 0.6 per cent of the corresponding appropriation and that, overall, the unencumbered balance of $23.6 million represented 1.4 per cent of appropriations. Therefore, past experience would seem to indicate that the reduction proposed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 22 of its report (A/46/7) would have virtually no impact on budget sections. At all events, any such impact could easily be absorbed through the

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flexible application of the procedure for transfers between sections recommended by the Advisory Committee.

51. The underutilization of appropriated funds would continue in the next biennium. There had been a serious delay in implementing the integrated management information system (IMIS) project, which was to provide precise estimates based on proper assessment of budget performance and ensure optimum use of funds. Owing to that delay, the state of implementation of programme activities would not improve before 1994. On the other hand, if the IMIS project began to function earlier, it would facilitate frequent transfers between sections and better use of available resources during the biennium.

52. The current methodology for measuring real growth in the programme budget was focused on the increase in recurrent expenditures and therefore often failed to note increases in non-recurrent expenditures, which constituted a large part of the funds needed to carry out new activities. When measured by the methodology commonly used outside the United Nations, the growth rate was lower in such important sectors as peace and security, cooperation for development and disaster relief. In contrast, the common-services sectors would grow at a rate of slightly under 2.6 per cent, instead of the 0.1 per cent indicated by the Secretariat.

53. The requested 81 new posts were distributed across all budget sections but with a concentration in the Centre for Human Rights, for which 17 new posts were proposed. Thus, priorities were not being clearly translated into staffing changes. It must be recognized that, as a result of the laudable effort to identify obsolete programmes and redeploy resources, small reductions in posts had been proposed in section 9 (Legal activities), section 18 (Centre for Science and Technology for Development), and section 15 (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development).

54. The general lack of initiative shown by programme managers in redeploying scarce resources to more productive sectors remained worrying. In the light of the five priority areas identified by the General Assembly in resolution 45/255 the Secretary-General could have acted boldly to identify obsolete activities and utilize the resulting resources to strengthen priority activities. Particularly with respect to the maintenance of peace and security it was essential to effect a major redeployment of staff and financial resources to strengthen the functions and capacities of the Secretariat in the areas of conflict prevention and promotion of disarmament.

55. The Organization would never be able to dispense with extrabudgetary resources, for not all of its activities could be financed from assessed contributions, and there was no reason to reduce its dependence on such resources. Extrabudgetary resources had grown along with assessed contributions, and the Financial Regulations empowered the Secretary-General to accept voluntary contributions from governmental and non-governmental organizations in certain circumstances. In 1988 and 1989 the General Assembly had elaborated guidelines for the receipt and administration of voluntary

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contributions to certain activities, and it was a matter for satisfaction that the guidelines had been applied in the peace-keeping operations launched since 1988. The experience thus gained should serve as a basis for addressing in the General Assembly the problem of the use of extrabudgetary resources. His delegation looked forward to the corresponding report of the Secretary-General.

56. Lastly, his delegation expected that various methodological issues would continue to be identified and resolved in accordance with the recommendations contained in the CPC report (A/46/16, paras. 48 and 49). It was to be hoped that, on the basis of the programme of work proposed by CPC, the United Nations would be able to establish an effective methodology for the preparation of its programme budget, so that it would reflect adequately the content of intergovernmental decisions and the new and changing priorities.

57. Mr. HUQ (Bangladesh) said that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 had come at a time when the world was witnessing radical changes of gigantic proportions and the beginning of a new era of peace and cooperation. His delegation hoped that the new budget would enable the Organization to discharge its mandate and carry out the expanding and complex tasks entrusted to it.

58. He shared the concern of the Secretary-General and the Chairman of ACABQ regarding the financial crisis of the Organization, which persisted despite the implementation of the reforms and the increase in confidence in the United Nations; no organization could effectively discharge its responsibilities in an environment of financial crisis and uncertainty. Sound financial planning in the United Nations required that Member States should pay their contributions in full and on time both to the regular budget and to peace-keeping activities.

59. The programme budget proposed by the Secretary-General amounted to $2.36 billion, representing a total increase of $228.9 million over the revised appropriations for the previous biennium and a rate of real growth of 0.9 per cent, i.e. slightly higher than the zero rate indicated in the budget outline. However, at similar prices the total amount of resources for the biennium was lower than the adjusted preliminary estimates submitted in the outline. The Organization's increased responsibilities and the need to retain some flexibility fully justified the proposed real growth rate. Moreover, the resources requested by the Secretary-General were essential for the delivery of the proposed programmes.

60. As the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had stated, there was a need to reach agreement on the relationship between the budget and the budget outline, a relationship which should be governed by the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213. At the same time, it was important to be flexible at the current early stage of the new budget process and consider the outline not as an absolute ceiling but as a preliminary indication of the resources needed.

(Mr. Huq, Bangladesh)

61. The proposed programme budget had given priority to five main areas of activity: the maintenance of international peace and security; the economic development of developing countries; the economic recovery and development of Africa; the environment; and international drug control. It should be noted in that regard that the first two areas were closely connected and that the end of the cold war had opened up new possibilities for international peace and security and established the basis for a more dynamic and active role for the United Nations. Furthermore, in view of the fact that many developing countries continued to suffer as a result of the difficult international economic environment, it was to be hoped that at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, appropriate priority would be given to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

62. While 10 of the 36 expenditure sections in the proposed budget would have rates of real growth above 2 per cent, negative rates of real growth were proposed for three sections: the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and Legal Activities. The proposed reductions for the first two sections were puzzling: in view of the important role they played in the development of the developing countries, those organizations should be strengthened, not given fewer resources.

63. The proposed programme budget did not provide increased resources for certain priority subprogrammes in the economic and social sectors under the medium-term plan. CPC had noted that the implementation of a number of priority subprogrammes would depend on the availability of extrabudgetary resources. Clarification from the Secretariat on that aspect of the budget would be appreciated.

64. It was gratifying to note that the allocation for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had been increased and that the budget included a non-recurrent amount of $132.5 million for the construction of regional commission offices in Bangkok, Addis Ababa and Santiago. Estimated extrabudgetary resources under the proposed programme budget would amount to $3.08 billion, which represented a nominal increase of 4.7 per cent over the previous biennium. Those resources helped to finance the Organization's activities; as extrabudgetary resources increased, so did their impact on activities financed under the regular budget. Accordingly, care should be taken to assign extrabudgetary resources in such a way that the programme priority order was maintained; there should also be greater transparency in the use and management of those resources. Demands by donor countries for reports and accounting substantially increased the administrative and management burden of various Secretariat units; those activities should accordingly be streamlined. In addition, policy guidelines should be established to charge a fair share of support costs to extrabudgetary funds.

(Mr. Huq, Bangladesh)

65. The Fifth Committee had set an exemplary precedent in adopting the previous programme budget by consensus. It was to be hoped that the same spirit of understanding and cooperation would prevail in 1991; his delegation would do its best to ensure that it did.

66. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that the purpose of the budget was to give life to the mandated programmes. The budget could thus be considered as proof of the willingness of Member States to implement their own decisions. The Organization's budget had to be set up in such a way as to ensure prompt and full implementation of all United Nations activities and mandates. It was on the basis of those considerations that her delegation had analysed the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

67. As proposed by the Secretary-General, the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 amounted to $2.36 billion, which represented a rate of real growth of 0.9 per cent over the previous budget. In view of the rates of real growth of the past decade, the proposed increase only partly offset the adverse effects of the severe financial crisis faced by the Organization in 1986: in real terms, the United Nations would have less to spend in 1992 than in 1982. The constraints imposed by that stagnation were even more significant because the status and the responsibilities of the United Nations in all fields had been growing. Her delegation, therefore, had no objection to the proposed rate of real growth, aptly termed "modest" by the Secretary-General, and wished to commend the Secretariat on its moderate approach.

68. With regard to the distribution of the real growth, it was gratifying to note that the principal beneficiaries were those sectors to which the highest priority had been accorded and the importance of which was undeniable: the maintenance of international peace and security; the economic development of developing countries; the economic recovery and development of Africa; the environment; and international drug control, as well as the protection of human rights. Nevertheless, the level of the growth rates of individual programmes should be seen in relation not only to their percentage share of total budget resources but also to the size of the programmes themselves; thus, important programmes which had minimal share of the overall budget resources should receive a comparatively higher rate of real growth. It should be noted that growth rates in high priority areas were partially offset by a corresponding reduction in activities financed from extrabudgetary resources, as was the case in section 22 (International drug control). Such a reduction in extrabudgetary funding or in the number of posts had to be compensated by a corresponding increase in resources allocated under the regular budget.

69. Although the level of extrabudgetary resources was neither decided upon nor controlled by the General Assembly, those resources were linked in an important way to the regular budget. Extrabudgetary resources, which currently amounted to over $3 billion and thus exceeded assessed contributions, were being used increasingly for activities and programmes

(Ms. Rotheiser, Austria)

mandated by the General Assembly and for the corresponding posts. If for any reason that funding was interrupted, those activities and posts would thus be eliminated. Accordingly, she wished to draw attention to the fact that important programmes, such as the environment and international drug control, depended to a large extent on extrabudgetary resources. To rely on such an uncertain source of funding for its activities could be detrimental to the interests of the Organization. All programmes and activities mandated by the General Assembly must, therefore, be financed under the regular budget; moreover, the General Assembly should monitor the allocation of all extrabudgetary resources.

70. In its report on the proposed programme budget (A/46/7), the Advisory Committee had proposed reductions in the expenditure estimates totalling some $43.4 million, and had explained (paras. 21 and 22) that a part of that reduction ($13.43 million) was to offset anticipated savings. Such an approach was problematic since it did not encourage the Secretariat to achieve savings and the actual amount of eventual savings could not be foreseen. Accordingly, her delegation was not in a position to support the Advisory Committee's recommendation for the deletion of $13.34 million from the overall level of resources. With regard to the deletion of the remainder, of roughly $30 million, her delegation would comment within the context of the section-by-section examination of the budget.

71. The proposed reduction of $43.4 million would result in a negative rate of real growth, which would be unacceptable since it would have a negative impact on the work of the Organization and would jeopardize the future functioning of the United Nations. In that connection she would welcome it if the Secretariat could indicate the rate of real growth that would result if all the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee were approved.

72. The Secretary-General was proposing a net increase of 81 posts in the staffing table, as well as 1 downward and 60 upward reclassifications. While such an increase in the staffing table was acceptable in principle, her delegation did not concur in the proposed distribution of the posts in question.

73. A greater effort could have been made regarding redeployment of posts. While it required some courage to eliminate mandates that had already been discharged, a clear indication by the Secretariat of which programmes had already concluded would have been helpful. In that connection, it was regrettable that new posts had not been budgeted for in the case of various programmes that were understaffed yet which had been assigned new mandates. One such example was the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which not only had not received additional staffing under the regular budget but had even lost six posts funded from extrabudgetary resources.

74. The situation was all the more regrettable since United Nations activities in the social field had had a considerable impact on Member States in the past and would continue to do so. In view of the efforts under way

(Ms. Rotheiser, Austria)

throughout the world to improve social conditions, her delegation asked for the proposed programme budget to be reconsidered with a view to enhancing activities in the field of social development and social welfare, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/16, which had been endorsed by CPC.

75. As advocated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 22 of its report, there should be more flexible application of the procedure for transfers between budget sections, since that would enable the Secretariat to respond more quickly to changing requirements. Such flexibility might be needed, in particular, with regard to the operation and level of the contingency fund.

76. The methodology for the preparation of the programme budget, although improved, still left room for further streamlining and greater transparency, especially with regard to non-recurrent expenditures and the determination of the rate of real growth. The Secretariat should continue its efforts in that domain. The holding of an ad hoc technical seminar to review questions of methodology, as recommended by CPC, would be useful.

77. The programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was the second budget presented under the reform process initiated by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213. The new budgetary process thus seemed to have been consolidated, and it was to be hoped that reform would continue.

78. The debate on the budget would remain academic unless the Organization was actually endowed with all the funds required in a timely manner. In that context, her delegation shared the Secretary-General's grave concern at the seriousness of the Organization's financial situation. Until a permanent solution to the problem of the timely and full payment of assessed contributions was found, implementation of General Assembly decisions could not be guaranteed. Her delegation was ready to cooperate with the Secretary-General and other delegations in achieving a sound financial basis for the Organization.

79. Mr. FAZL-I-MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that his delegation shared the Secretary-General's concern over the fact that the Organization's serious financial crisis was continuing at a time when changes were taking place in the world that were opening up possibilities for a more dynamic and active role for the United Nations, and endorsed his plea that sufficient budgetary provisions should be authorized for the biennium 1992-1993 to enable the Organization to implement effectively all the programmes mandated by the General Assembly.

80. While highlighting the need for the availability of adequate resources, Member States should practice prudence during what was a period of austerity and insufficient economic growth around the globe. The proposed nominal and real growth rates (10.7 per cent and 0.9 per cent, respectively) should not cause Member States to weaken in their commitment to a zero rate of growth. In that connection, the Secretariat should scrutinize and review its

(Mr. Fazl-i-Mahmood, Pakistan)

projections and propose reductions which could be made without affecting the basic objectives of the programmes mandated by the General Assembly.

81. The addition of 81 posts to the staffing table was one of the three factors accounting for the rate of real growth of 0.9 per cent. A simple arithmetical calculation revealed that the unit cost of the new posts was approximately $113,500, given which the question arose of whether the expenditure was really necessary. Similarly, 67 posts were being reclassified at an estimated cost of $2,718,600, which indicated an increase per post of close to $40,576. That amount should be reviewed and some of the requests for reclassification should be deferred to the next budget year. The introduction of the concept of post classification had been aimed, in part, at curbing the tendency on the part of programme managers to upgrade posts by ascertaining their "true value" to the Organization and its programmes. The increase in appropriations proposed thus negated the aim of classification. His delegation would welcome statistics on the number of posts which had been reclassified at higher or lower levels over the past three bienniums, in both the Professional and General Service categories and under regular and extrabudgetary funds, as well as a statement of the costs or savings generated as a result.

82. The common support services had swallowed a significant part of resource requirements in contrast with what had been earmarked for international and regional cooperation for development. That sector also needed to be looked at very carefully. In that context, he supported the comments made by the representative of Indonesia concerning the allocation of resources for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The regional commissions had played, and would continue to play, an important role in development and should be given budgetary support that was adequate for the tasks entrusted to them. Extrabudgetary resources were no substitute for appropriate support from within the regular budget of the Organization.

83. He expressed satisfaction at the determination of five priority areas, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security, economic development of developing countries, economic recovery and development of Africa, the environment and international drug control. However, it was disturbing to see that the figure for resource allocations for maintenance of international peace and security for the biennium 1992-1993 was lower than the revised appropriation for such activities in the previous biennium. He would like to be assured that the reduction would not affect the current peace-keeping operations of the United Nations.

84. Recent positive developments in international relations, had enhanced the role of the United Nations in the world, in particular with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security and economic progress. Accordingly, the Secretary-General must remain prepared to take, on short notice, immediate and urgent action; he would therefore require appropriations for contingent funds.

(Mr. Fazl-i-Mahmood, Pakistan)

85. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee had pointed out, on 10 October, that it was not useful, either to the Secretariat or to Member States, to make general declarations about the need for "additional flexibility" without being more specific. The representatives of the Secretariat should clearly identify all the elements which, in their view, called for "additional flexibility" so as to enable the Fifth Committee to study the matter in proper perspective.

86. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee had also noted that there always were savings at the end of the approved biennium budget. That showed that there was a gap between the expenditure actually effected and the amounts allocated to the various programmes. It also indicated that there were delays in programme implementation; those delays needed to be addressed so that the funds allocated were utilized in a timely and effective manner. His delegation again emphasized the need for maintaining financial discipline and, at the same time, ensuring appropriate allocations and optimal utilization of resources.

87. Mr. GREGG (Australia), speaking on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and Australia, said that together their contributions accounted for nearly 5 per cent of the regular budget and that they always paid up in a timely fashion.

88. The three delegations supported the application of the zero real growth principle to all United Nations system budgets; they also recognized that it was not yet mandatory, that there was a need for a dynamic approach which allowed for some flexibility and that the Secretary-General should have scope to include funding proposals for newly mandated programmes. That raised the complex issue of the relationship between the outline and the proposed level of the budget. When the Secretary-General had introduced the outline he had projected a rate of real growth of zero per cent (A/45/369, para. 15) and had noted that the substantial reductions in resource requirements for Namibia meant that it would be possible to fund many additional activities in the period 1992-1993. That fact appeared to have been overlooked by those who seemed to believe that the work programme of the Organization was static and that programmes, once approved, should be implemented for the rest of time. A dynamic United Nations that genuinely responded to the demands of the 1990s would also have to discontinue many old activities which no longer served the interests of Member States or of the international community. The growth rate currently being proposed raised questions regarding the relevance of the outline to the budget process. It should be borne in mind that the underlying objective of the revised budget process was to enhance Member States' confidence in and support for the regular budget. It was also necessary to find more sophisticated mechanisms for transfering resources from obsolete and ineffective programmes to new or higher priority activities. In considering the extent to which the Secretariat should be given additional flexibility to redeploy funds already allocated, the Assembly should consider carefully whether or not resolutions on new programmes needed to dictate a specific Secretariat structure to carry them out. The Secretary-General should be given greater freedom to assign responsibility as he deemed appropriate.

(Mr. Gregg, Australia)

89. The problem of grade creep continued to be a cause for concern. The Secretary-General had proposed no fewer than 60 upward classifications for the biennium 1992-1993; the estimated cost of such reclassifications - nearly $3 million - was an important component of the proposed rate of real growth. Some of the reclassifications were justified but many were not. The delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand were particularly concerned that reclassification was being used to circumvent an open promotion process. While they favoured giving the Secretary-General greater flexibility to manage the Organization, it was necessary to have confidence in the ability of managers to act in a responsible manner. Constant upward reclassification undermined that confidence.

90. They were disappointed at the apparent absence of efficiency dividends, which the Advisory Committee had noted in paragraph 45 of its report. The Secretariat must, in future, demonstrate a greater capacity to move in the direction of private sector performance standards by offering up staff savings that reflected productivity gains resulting from the application of new technology. If there were no such gains it would be necessary to question the need for capital expenditure on technological innovations.

91. At the same time, the Organization's financial crisis was continuing and efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations would bear fruit only if Member States paid their contributions on time and in full.

92. The present system used in calculating the real growth rate was confusing and even misleading. The figure presented each biennium by the Secretary-General was not a real figure at all. As the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had pointed out, the time had come to abandon the non-recurrent costs concept in calculating real growth. A straightforward gross figure should be compared with a similar total from the previous biennium. Greater transparency would also facilitate agreement among Member States, since the Treasuries and finance ministers would have greater confidence in the calculation and would be in a better position to plan future allocations. Naturally, in order to reach a position that was comparable to and compatible with national administrations, it would also be necessary to tackle the problem of large-scale increases resulting from currency and exchange rate fluctuations. Meanwhile, the Secretariat could be asked, at the current session, to develop a new methodology for calculating budget growth which would exclude the non-recurrent cost concept.

93. The programme budget for the currrent biennium was the first step in the implementation of the Medium-Term Plan for 1992-1997 whose general and specific objectives the Secretariat had been asked to meet. The Secretariat should monitor its Plan performance continually for both effectiveness and efficiency, but the objective of such monitoring would not be reached if it was done with the sole purpose of submitting a report to the General Assembly.

(Mr. Gregg, Australia)

94. The delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand were in favour of giving the Secretariat more flexibility in managing resources, but felt that it would have to review its performance constantly in order to make early judgements concerning the quality and effectiveness of programmes so as to improve its management. The need to look at outputs in terms of Plan objectives was especially important when considering the use of extrabudgetary resources.

95. The impact of extrabudgetary funding on activities financed under the regular budget needed to be carefully monitored. Moreover, the tendency for extrabudgetary expenses to be absorbed into the regular budget was disturbing. A clear distinction must be made between the two elements and the costs must be apportioned accordingly.

96. The delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand agreed in principle with the Secretary-General's proposals, as amended by the Advisory Committee, and disagreed with those who suggested that the initial Secretariat proposals should be accepted without amendment. Delegations were not bound to accept the Advisory Committee's opinion, but they should respect it for what it was; they should also remember that they were dealing with expenditure estimates that could be revised during the course of the biennium. The fact that the Advisory Committee had so easily been able to identify $43 million in savings suggested that there was still plenty of room for further savings. It was worth noting that there remained over $20 million of underutilized balances in the budget base and, as the Advisory Committee had pointed out, that should enable the Secretariat to absorb considerable additional expenditure during the next biennium.

97. Mr. KHOAM (Cameroon) said that the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993 should be considered in the light of the serious financial crisis facing the United Nations and most third world countries. That was important because United Nations budget assessments were binding on all Member States once there was agreement on the programmes to be implemented, and because the inability of Member States to pay their dues on time would exacerbate the financial situation of the Organization and hamper the implementation of its programmes.

98. As at 1 October 1991, the unpaid assessments totalled $723.5 million, which was over three quarters of the sum due for 1991. That situation was partially a reflection of the terrible financial situation in which certain Member States found themselves. His delegation sincerely hoped that given the current improved image of the United Nations, those Member States that were withholding their contributions for reasons other than financial hardship would be ready to release those much-needed funds and even to contribute more to the Organization's regular budget for 1992-1993.

(Mr. Khoam, Cameroon)

99. Although it was gratifying that the priorities of the proposed programme budget included the economic development of developing countries and the economic recovery and development of Africa, as well as the implementation of a new programme on Africa's critical economic situation, it was regrettable that the priority status of those activities had not been reflected in a greater increase in the funds allocated to them in the proposed budget.

100. The Declaration on International Economic Cooperation adopted by the General Assembly in 1990 had not yet produced results, due to the lack of a supportive international environment for the domestic economic reforms being carried out by developing countries. His delegation noted with regret the negative rates of real growth for sections 15 and 18 (UNCTAD and the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, respectively) of the proposed programme budget. Adequate resources should be provided for the economic recovery and development of Africa, and the relevant recommendations in the CPC report (A/46/16) were very welcome.

101. His delegation welcomed the efforts being made to strengthen the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, based in Vienna. It would like the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to be strengthened also, in the context of the review of the administrative functioning of the various departments having mandates related to global social development issues. The strengthening of that Centre was particularly important because its Division for the Advancement of Women, which was to prepare the 1994 Year of the Family and the World Conference on Women, was so small.

102. His delegation was firmly convinced that increased resources to finance the priority programmes could be obtained through redeployments and the phasing out of obsolete activities. The Secretary-General should be asked to look for appropriate ways of enhancing the transfer of resources between sections of the budget.

103. Extrabudgetary funding of programmes through voluntary contributions, which had become increasingly important in recent years, could not be a solution to the Organization's financial problems. That arrangement gave the voluntary donor States the opportunity to interfere in the day-to-day administration of the Organization or its benefiting agencies. There was therefore a tendency to support the idea that the financing of the Organization's activities should be based solely on assessed contributions. However, the choice between two evils was always difficult to make.

104. It was regrettable that the Organization's Working Capital Fund had become insufficient. The Fund should be increased as suggested by the Secretary-General, even though some Member States might take advantage of the increase to avoid paying their dues. It should also be remembered that the increase in the Working Capital Fund could only be part of a solution to the Organization's financial crisis, as it was becoming increasingly clear that most Member States were unable to pay their assessed dues either on time or at all. One possible source of financing for the increase could be the transfer of unspent funds retained from biennial budgets.

105. Mr. EL DEEB (Egypt) said that the total figure proposed in the proposed programme budget seemed reasonable, in the light of the various functions to be performed by the United Nations in the context of the new international order. It was understandable that the goal was to maintain a zero per cent growth rate, but from a practical standpoint the 0.9 per cent growth rate proposed by the Secretary-General for the biennium 1992-1993 was a very balanced one, given the current international situation. His delegation supported the proposed programme budget with a view to enhancing the productivity and efficiency of United Nations activities.

106. Commenting on the designation of priorities in the proposed programme budget, he observed that in its report, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $16,600 in the estimates for section 11A (Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation). No reductions of any kind should be made in that section, given the critical economic situation of Africa, which required increased international support. He was pleased to note that the Advisory Committee supported the Secretary-General's estimates for section 23A (Economic Commission for Africa). It was important to support the language training activities in the four official languages of the Commission. The General Assembly should also invite the Administrator of UNDP to provide sufficient resources to support the economic integration process and to enable the Pan-African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) to function properly. It was likewise important to develop the activities of the African Institute for Economic Planning and Development and its work in the field of training, particularly the training of nationals of African States.

107. With regard to facilities and construction work in Africa, part X of General Assembly resolution 45/248, on the construction of additional ECA conference facilities in Addis Ababa, should be borne in mind. The report of the Secretary-General on the ECA translation and interpretation services for all official languages requested in resolution 45/248 B should be considered at the current session. Concerning Namibia, the provisions of resolution 45/248 B should be implemented and the Secretary-General should submit to the General Assembly a report on the complementary measures called for in resolution 44/243. It was particularly important to implement the provisions of that resolution concerning the systematic regionalization of programmes and activities relating to Namibia. The same applied to the financing of the scholarship programme for Namibian students.

108. Questions relating to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were of special importance, given the efficient way in which it was performing its task of assisting the Palestinian people. UNRWA's work was essential and should be supported; however, it was no substitute for a just and lasting solution to the problems of the region, which would improve prospects for international peace and security. With regard to the information in the proposed programme budget and in the report of the Advisory Committee concerning the financing of activities in the occupied territories, his delegation acknowledged the great value of

(Mr. El Deeb, Egypt)

voluntary contributions but considered that they could not take the place of greater United Nations interest in resolving the critical situation of the Palestinian people. General Assembly resolution 3331 (XXIX) stated that expenses for salaries of staff in the service of UNRWA should be financed by the regular budget of the United Nations. The Advisory Committee's recommendation for a reduction of $600,400 was unjustified and the full amount proposed by the Secretary-General should be approved.

109. Lastly, with regard to section 30 of the proposed budget (Disaster relief operations), his delegation considered that, in accordance with resolution 44/236 on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the General Assembly should approve the full amount of the proposed estimates.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.